



# **Peninsula City Church**

**Stop and Think!**

**Why are we so angry?**

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# Why are we so angry?

Q. How does a Christ-follower live in an angry world?

## An Introduction

Have you ever stopped and noticed how angry the world can be? For example, we have attempted genocide occurring in French Congo in Africa at the moment; there is the anger between same-sex advocates and those who are against it. Then there is daily road rage, angry youths and gangs breaking into homes and businesses and the owners who are angry with them. There are family members who are angry with each other, to mention some example of the anger that is around us. Then there is you and me who are angry with...

You may be thinking I can see that people around me are angry, but I am not angry. If that is true, let me ask you a couple of questions by way of example, "What do you do when someone cuts you off in traffic?" "What would you do if someone let a shopping trolley go and it scratched your car, and they just left?" "What do you do when someone accuses you of something that you never did or is not true?" We may remember that line in the Walt Disney classic, movie 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,' which the Wicked Queen says the famous line, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall?" Maybe sometimes we need to stop and take a good look in the mirror at who we are and how we respond in certain moments.

### 1. What are we all angry about?

Q. So, what is the problem?

To begin with, we need to ask, "What is the problem, why are we getting so angry?" as Bridget Delaney of the Guardian Newspaper has asked. She has pointed out that, "Australians are among the luckiest people on Earth. What are we so angry about?" She says

"In all this road rage, seething anger at queues, fury at someone in your space, there's an enormous sense of entitlement... Yet anger has been so seeded into Australia's discourse, into our very identity – the default mode used by politicians, the media and citizens – that we accept it as just a thing that happens now, and we pick a side (and get angry, very angry at the other side)."<sup>1</sup>

An incident that reflects this anger is seen in that a,

"A DRIVER was punched up to six times after he didn't let another car cut into his lane in Melbourne. Sadly, this is not an isolated incident... New research shows a huge percentage of drivers are equally aggressive behind the wheel. Up to 86 percent of Australians on the road admit to being aggressive when driving."<sup>2</sup>

Then there is the ABC report regarding anger on Facebook,

"Death threats, verbal abuse, and trolling — when you're running a local community Facebook group it comes with the territory... We have seen lots of negativity on posts towards topics such as religious groups, LGBT community, cyclists and posts about things such as

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<sup>1</sup> Delaney, Bridget. "Australians are among the luckiest people on Earth. What are we so angry about?"

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/apr/27/australians-are-among-the-luckiest-people-on-earth-what-are-we-so-angry-about> (28<sup>th</sup> March 2018).

<sup>2</sup> "Almost 90 per cent of Victorian drivers admit to being aggressive on the road."

<http://www.news.com.au/technology/innovation/motoring/almost-90-per-cent-of-victorian-drivers-admit-to-being-aggressive-on-the-road/news-story/486c4d09c50db51e0bce7ad3285f0d14> (28<sup>th</sup> March 2018).

vaccinations and politics often become very heated as people have such passionate and opposing views on these subjects.”<sup>3</sup>

Then if we come a little closer to home, we might ask, “Why are so many Christ-followers so angry with each other?” We have all heard or been a part of denominational disputes and angry congregational clashes. These may be over things like the music or worship styles, Bible translations and interpretations and even the way to apply our faith. If there is only one church (body Eph 4:4) why are we so angry with each other at times over these kinds of things?

This is not a new thing as humanity has been angry with each other since the fall, Gen 4 Able and Cain. Then we as the church have been angry and even killing each other for the last two thousand years. It could be asked if we have been living as Christ-followers or as those affected by the philosophy of the system of selfishness and pride. You only need to take a glance throughout church history to know that this has been the case.

In light of this, let me tell you about an interesting experience that I had just over a month ago. One morning I was cleaning my teeth when I was overwhelmed with the feeling of immense anger. Now I was not angry about anything or anyone at the time, but the feeling of anger was extreme. I asked the Lord, “What was happening to me?” He shared with me that this was a tiny experience of the collective anger that was boiling within the hearts of people in the world.

He said that the world contains so much sinful anger and that He was letting me get a brief experience of a minuscule part of the anger. He said that if He let me have too much more it may harm me. Now, what I experienced was extremely painful and crushing, in fact, it was awful. I have never experienced anything like it, and I hope that I do not ever again. I asked God why there was so much anger in the world and He said because of Satan and sin (selfishness and pride). He said that this sinful anger is what Christ took to the cross, but much of humanity has rejected Christ’s atoning death for their atoning remedies.

## 2. The way a Christ-follower should live

**Q.** What would you say to a Christ-follower on how to live in an angry world?

So, having briefly reviewed the anger in the world around us and even our own church community and lives how then should we live? We need to know who we are and how to live in light of this truth. Well, as Christ-followers we are children of God, and He is our Heavenly Father, Jn 1:12; Eph 2:18; 4:6. This should make us more thoughtful in the way we live our life moment by moment. This is not stating that we will not have our challenging and hard times, but it does say that we have a basis to live from as His children. In light of this, we need to live a life of reflective practice. It has been said that,

“Reflective practice is an active, dynamic action-based and ethical set of skills, placed in real time and dealing with real, complex and difficult situations.”<sup>4</sup>

As Christ-followers we are in a continual relationship with the ever-present Holy Spirit. We have not been left as orphans, but as Jesus Christ said,

<sup>15</sup> “If you love Me, obey My commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. <sup>17</sup> He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth.

<sup>3</sup> Williams, Patrick. “Facebook’s dark side: Bullying, defamation, and death threats in your local community group.” <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-02-16/facebook-dark-side-bullying-stalking-in-community-groups/9397028> (28<sup>th</sup> March 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Moon, Jennifer A. *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development: Theory and Practice*. (London: Kogan Page, 1999), 58.

The world cannot receive Him because it isn't looking for Him and doesn't recognise Him. But you know Him because He lives with you now and later will be in you. <sup>18</sup> No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Soon the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me. Since I live, you also will live" (Jn 14:15-19 NLT).

So, the Holy Spirit has testified to us that, we are His children and that, He lives resident within His church. He is the fruit provider, He is continually developing within us (as His church) as we walk in step with Him, Gal 5:16,25. The life that we once lived no longer cuts it as Christ-followers. The evidence of the old lifestyle is mentioned in Gal 5:19-21. This is an especially the angry aspects of this life,

<sup>19</sup> "When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, <sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God" (Gal 5:19-21 NLT).

There needs to be evidence of the new lifestyle in our lives. The features of the Holy Spirit mentioned here in Galatians 5:22-23 are as follows,

<sup>22</sup> "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit (singular harvest, or result, effect) in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!" (Gal 5:22-23 NLT).

This stands opposed to the old way of living. It is the Kingdom of God way of living in step with the Holy Spirit.

So, what are these aspects of our new life that we need to be letting the Holy Spirit continually displaying? These following qualities are really only one quality, as Paul used the singular and not a plural. However, these nine are in complete unity, as they are part of the character of the person of the Holy Spirit and not merely objects. Well, they are,

- Love: This is the agape or heavenly love, that seeks the highest good of another, whether there is any response or not.
- Joy: This is not happiness, but rather a deep, internal and unmovable rejoicing in the Holy Spirit's joy.
- Peace: This is in fact, a deep, internal and unmovable "repose and quietness, even in the face of adverse circumstances; it defies human understanding."<sup>5</sup>
- Patience: It carries the idea of no revenge in any way, but rather to temper one's impatience. But it also has the meaning, "that means 'ever tapping' or 'never quitting.'"<sup>6</sup> That is, being able to tolerate what life throws our way, or having long-temperance or restraint.
- Kindness: The idea of goodwill or having a sweet spirit, or reacting in the opposite spirit if someone treats you badly.
- Goodness: Is being full of virtue and integrity. This is that, which is to be found within Christ-followers, reaching out to others for good, regardless of whether it is merited or not.

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<sup>5</sup> Walvoord, John F. & Zuck, Roy B. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament Edition*. (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1984), 608.

<sup>6</sup> Simmons, Brian. *Letters From Heaven By the Apostle Paul: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Timothy*. (The Passion Translation) (p. 32). BroadStreet Publishing Group LLC. Kindle Edition.

- Faithfulness: This is the faith that overcomes in all circumstances to become a trustworthy one.
- Gentleness: This carries the idea of being humbly submitted to the will of God without deviousness and being truly understanding of others.
- Self-control: “Although the word self is not found in this verse, most translations render this as ‘self-control.’ The word is actually ‘lordship,’ or by implication ‘spirit-strength.’”<sup>7</sup> Or another way to look at it is self-mastery under the influence and Lordship of the Holy Spirit.

However, all of this is based on the truth that we are dead to self and alive to Jesus Christ by faith. This is seen in the next verse in Galatians,

“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to His cross and crucified them there” (Gal 5:24 NLT)

So, by receiving the Holy Spirit, it declares that we have “identified with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection.”<sup>8</sup> Wow, this is an amazingly liberating truth that if, accepted by faith can have far-reaching implications. It has been pointed out that,

“While co-crucifixion took place at the cross, it becomes effective for believers when they are converted... Faith must continually lay hold of this truth, or a believer will be tempted to try to secure victory by self-effort.”<sup>9</sup>

That is why Paul said to keep in step with the Holy Spirit as He leads us,

“Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives” (Gal 5:25 NLT).

The idea here is that it is step by step relationship, totally reliant on the Holy Spirit at all times. Now, remember that all of this second point, “The way a Christ-follower should live.” This is within the context of how to live in an angry world.

## Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

**Q.** How does a Christ-follower live in an angry world?

We need our eyes opened to see ourselves first before we look at the world around us. Maybe at times, we need just to take a good hard look at ourselves. We need to look in the mirror at who we are and how we respond in certain challenging moments. Do we see ourselves walking step by step being led by the Spirit, or are we fulfilling the lust of the flesh and displaying hostility, quarrelling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, dissension, and division?

James in his letter has said that we need to look into the Word of God as the only true mirror to reflect our heart. That is,

<sup>19</sup> “Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.” <sup>20</sup> Human anger does not produce the righteousness God

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<sup>7</sup> The background material for these nine characteristics of the Holy Spirit came from the following source material. Simmons, Brian. *Letters From Heaven By the Apostle Paul: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Timothy*. (The Passion Translation) (p. 32). BroadStreet Publishing Group LLC. Kindle Edition. Walvoord, John F. & Zuck, Roy B. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament Edition*. (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1984), 608.

<sup>8</sup> Walvoord, & Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 609.

<sup>9</sup> Walvoord, & Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 609.

desires.<sup>21</sup> So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the Word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

<sup>22</sup> But don't just listen to God's Word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if you listen to the Word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. <sup>25</sup> But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it" (Jas 1:19-25 NLT).

The perfect law that James was talking about is to, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Jas 2:8 NLT). In other words, thinking clearly not the only aspect of reflective practice. Setting our experience in the context of theory and the experience of others is an important part of reflective practice and learning. Reflective practice is that active, dynamic action-based and ethical set of skills, placed in real time and dealing with real, complex and difficult situations that can make you angry.

So, why are we so angry? Why are you so angry? The next time there is a moment when it is all going to unravel, "Stop and Think!" Then act from the truth of your true identity as a child of God the Father, who has been crucified with Christ and has the Holy Spirit with you. Remember that, the idea here is that, life needs to be a step by step relationship, totally reliant on the Holy Spirit at all times.

Pause in His presence for a moment and think this over...